

Final observations on 2 W. Market – Part 2: The motion to table (71)

The Bethlehem Gadfly 2 W. Market St., Gadfly's posts, Serious Issues December 28, 2018
(71st in a series of posts on 2 W. Market St.)

The 2nd round of supporting statements on 2 W. (69)

CW Van Wirt was on the losing end of the first-reading vote of 4-3 with CW Negron and CM Colon. How did she prepare for the second reading? How did she hope to influence at least one of her fellow councilpersons to change his vote?

- Like CM Reynolds, CW Van Wirt did considerable homework.
- She met with Mr. Rij, the patriarch of 2 W. Market.
- She asked the city for considerably more information on properties potentially impacted by the petition.

CW Van Wirt is a pro-active and (by her own admission, Gadfly believes) a data-driven person. In her supporting statement, CW Van Wirt said that the meeting with Mr. Rij that she thought was collegial culminated in a “threat” regarding the future fate of the property if the petition was denied by this man canonized by his supporters on and off Council and the kind of behavior explicitly denied several times by his character witnesses. One would think this rather dramatic revelation might give people who praised Mr. Rij some pause. It certainly did so for Gadfly.



The information requested from the city – apparently citing 64 properties (Gadfly has not seen the information) – was delivered the morning of the meeting, leaving little time for Council to study and discuss it. And the city official who prepared the information inexplicably did not come to the meeting to answer questions about it.

The general impact of this text amendment petition on the city at large that originated from one property owner for the benefit of that one property owner was a sticky point as far back as the Planning Commission hearing, where both PC members voting against the petition cited their concern about this significant information gap.

Subsequently, the petitioner provided a list of 7 properties that might be affected. There was obvious concern about using only data provided by the petitioner. Thus, this request by CW Van Wirt for comparable data from the city — an understandable request for data that would seem necessary in order to make a firmly founded decision.

On the basis that there was as yet no analysis of the city-prepared list and there was no city official to answer questions about it (Gadfly shared her “flabbergastment” at this official’s absence from the meeting), and thus that the impact of this petition on the city at large was unexamined, CW Van Wirt made what Gadfly thinks was a perfectly reasonable motion to table the petition pending that analysis. The motion — not discussable — failed 5-2, CW Negron joining her, CW Colon joining the affirmative side on this vote.

Though voices on Council appreciated the data from the city and thanked CW Van Wirt for taking the initiative to obtain it, there obviously was no felt need to delay a final vote by discussing it.

Gadfly felt very disturbed by Council action here in defeating the motion to table. The question of impact on the city at large was an open one, new information became available, that information was not considered, the city official responsible for the new information was not present to guide consideration at this crucial moment in a long and contentious process, there was no menacing deadline, a 5-6 year process could certainly bear another two weeks, and so forth.

It would seem that majority minds were made up, however, possibly that the new info wouldn’t matter or that safeguards in the system absolved them of considering these new “facts.”

Not good, feeleth Gadfly. Not good at all.
How about you?

There is another dimension to CW Van Wirt's supporting statement that we will pick up later with the CM Callahan commentary we have left hanging.

The actual words from the December 18 meeting on which these observations are based can be found in [The 2nd round of supporting statements on 2 W. \(69\)](#). Gadfly always suggests that you go the unmediated source and make your own observations. Gadfly's reflections on the first round of supporting statements can be found in [Critiquing the votes \(65\)](#)